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ABSTRACT

This handbook is written as an aid for classroom helpers who want to assist primary children with handwriting. It is designed for use by nonprofessionals after the class has received teacher-directed instruction. (JD)

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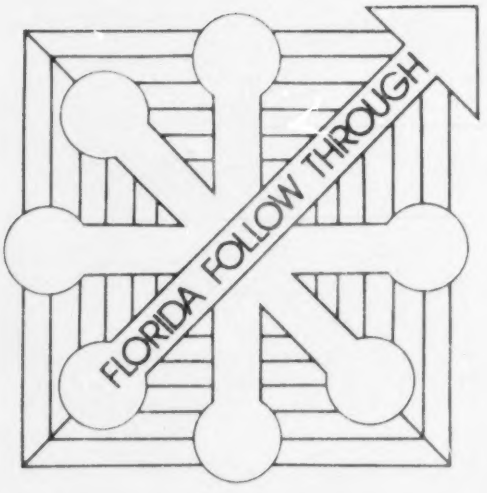
SCRAPS

A MINI-COURSE FOR VOLUNTEERS IN

HANDWRITING

(GRADES 1-3)



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FOREWORD

This packet was developed for Florida Follow Through by Janet Roehm, Hillsborough County Follow Through, as an aid for those classroom helpers who want to assist primary children with handwriting.

It has been a useful tool in Tampa's Follow Through classrooms as well as to those parents who want to help their children write at home in the same letter forms taught in the school. Since all schools do not use the same handwriting system, care should be taken to follow the letter forms set forth in each district's adopted text.

Appreciation is extended to the Hillsborough County Follow Through staff for their generosity in sharing this document with other Florida educators. For further information, contact Clara Nuccio, Director, Follow Through, 8412 13th Street, Tampa, Florida 33609 or Bettie Atwater, Consultant, Follow Through, Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

INDEX

	Page
Foreword	iii
The SCRAPS Program	1
Instructions	
To the Resource Person	5
To the Volunteer	6
Flow Chart	7
Are You Ready	8
Pre-Assessment	9
Activity 1 - Learning to Write	10
Post-Assessment - Part I	21
Activity 2 - Reviewing Letter Forms	22
Activity 3 - Look, Listen and Learn	23
Activity 4 - Read SCRAPS Program	25
Activity 5 - Practice Using SCRAPS	32
Activity 6 - Post-Assessment Part II	35
Glossary	36

The SCRAPS Program

The SCRAPS Program is a simplified handwriting tutor program designed for use by non-professionals in the classroom. It is intended for use only after the class has received teacher-directed instruction.

The volunteer does not write on the child's paper, but rather writes models, when needed, on SCRAPS of handwriting paper for the children to keep at their desks and copy while the volunteer moves on to the next child.

The acronym "SCRAPS" stands for the first letters of six common errors found in children's handwriting papers. The volunteer is instructed to study papers with the children to help them find only one type of error at a time. The volunteer then helps the child correct that error by using SCRAPS of paper on which is written appropriate letter forms as models for the child.

Prerequisites

This packet is intended for the classroom volunteer who has had some prior experiences in the school (story reading, monitoring, etc.) and is interested in working in specific instructional areas.

(1) Volunteers learn to write in the form prescribed for the children whom they will be helping.

(2) Volunteers will learn the SCRAPS technique of helping children with writing.

Self-Directed

Although the packet is intended to be largely self-directed, a resource person must intervene at various points in the instruction.

For best results, the resource person should observe the volunteer during the pre-assessment.

Why Manuscript?

Manuscript writing is emphasized because

(1) good manuscript writing provides the basis for good cursive writing.
(2) many volunteers are already adept at cursive writing, but are not familiar with manuscript forms.

(3) manuscript writing is used in primary classrooms.
(4) teaching cursive writing requires specific sequential steps so that the primary teacher may prefer to supervise these lessons particularly during the time a child is making the transition from manuscript to cursive writing.

Adapting Letter Forms

In using this packet, letter forms should be taken from the writing text which has been adopted by the school district.

MATERIALS LIST

	What The Volunteer Does	Materials Provided By The Resource Person	What The Resource Person Does
		Packet	Reads "Instructions for Administering the Packet"
	"Introduction" (p. 4) and reads "Instructions to the Volunteer" (p. 5)	Packet	Gives volunteer packet
Readiness	Fills out "Are You Ready?"	Copies of "Are You Ready?"	Completes bottom of "Are You Ready?"
Pre-assessment	Writes and checks oneself	Handwriting paper; Evaluation scale--third grade	Observes the volunteer (unobtrusively, if possible)
Activity #1	Learns letter forms	Packet, handwriting paper	Checks after each of 10 daily lessons
Activity #2	Reviews letter forms	Letter form chart, paper	
Activity #3	Observes class during handwriting lesson	Textbooks, Copies of "Classroom Observation Sheet"--Handwriting	Schedules observation time
Activity #4	Reads and studies SCRAPS, Makes SCRAPS pad	Paper, paper cutter or scissors, stapler	
Activity #5	Practices SCRAPS or role plays oneself	Handwriting Sample (p. 32)	Provides another volunteer as a partner or role plays oneself
Activity #6	Uses SCRAPS under supervision		Observes and evaluates volunteer (using questions, p. 34)

PACKET I: HANDWRITING

Introduction

When you finish the activities in this packet you will know how to write in the same way the children are being taught in school. You will also be able to help children improve their handwriting. You will learn a special technique for this called SCRAPS.

Much of the work will be self-directed (you will teach yourself). A Resource Person will help you at various times as you work. This person may be a teacher, an aide, a volunteer coordinator, a parent, or another volunteer.

As a volunteer, you are a very importnat part of this school's program! Welcome to this phase of your involvement. Please read the Instructions to the Volunteer (p. 6). Good Luck!

****
*
* Volunteers are very important people. Just one volunteer doubles the staff in a one-teacher classroom.
*
****

INSTRUCTIONS

"To The Resource Person"

Check off each item as the packet is administered.

_____ 1. Read the entire packet yourself.

_____ 2. Make copies of the "Are You Ready?" sheet (p. 8) "Letter Formation Charts" (p. 39) and "Classroom Observation Chart" (p. 24).

_____ 3. Help the volunteers assess their readiness for this packet by having them fill out an "Are You Ready?" sheet.

_____ 4. If the volunteers answer yes to the first three questions, complete the rest of the form and give it to them for reference.

_____ 5. Help the volunteers take the Pre-assessment (p. 9). Watch as they form letters. Help them decide which activity hey sould begin.

_____ 6. Read the chart (p. 3) which illustrates the additional responsibilities of the Resource Person and lists materials needed.

INSTRUCTIONS

"To The Volunteer"

1. Fill out the "Are You Ready?" form with your resource person. Your answers will tell you and your resource person if you are ready to begin this packet (p. 8).

   The resource person may be a teacher, volunteer coordinator, classroom aide or another volunteer. The job of this person is to get you started on the packet and check with you at various points while you work through the activities.

2. Take the Pre-assessment on page 9. It is a test that will tell you if your own handwriting is close to that taught in the school.

3. If your writing matches Specimen 1 you may skip Activity #1 and go to Activity #2. If you need to learn letter forms do Activity #1. Do one lesson in Activity #1 per day. (Perhaps in your spare time at home.) It is easier to learn and remember a few forms at a time. Space the practice over 10 days.

4. Have your resource person check each lesson in Activity #1.

5. Take the Post test (p. 21). You will compare your handwriting to a specimen again.

6. Do activity #3. You will observe the writing class in school. (Activities 3-5 may be done at the same time as you are learning lette. forms in Activity #1.)

7. Do Activity #4. Read and study the SCRAPS program. You will make a set of SCRAPS pads.

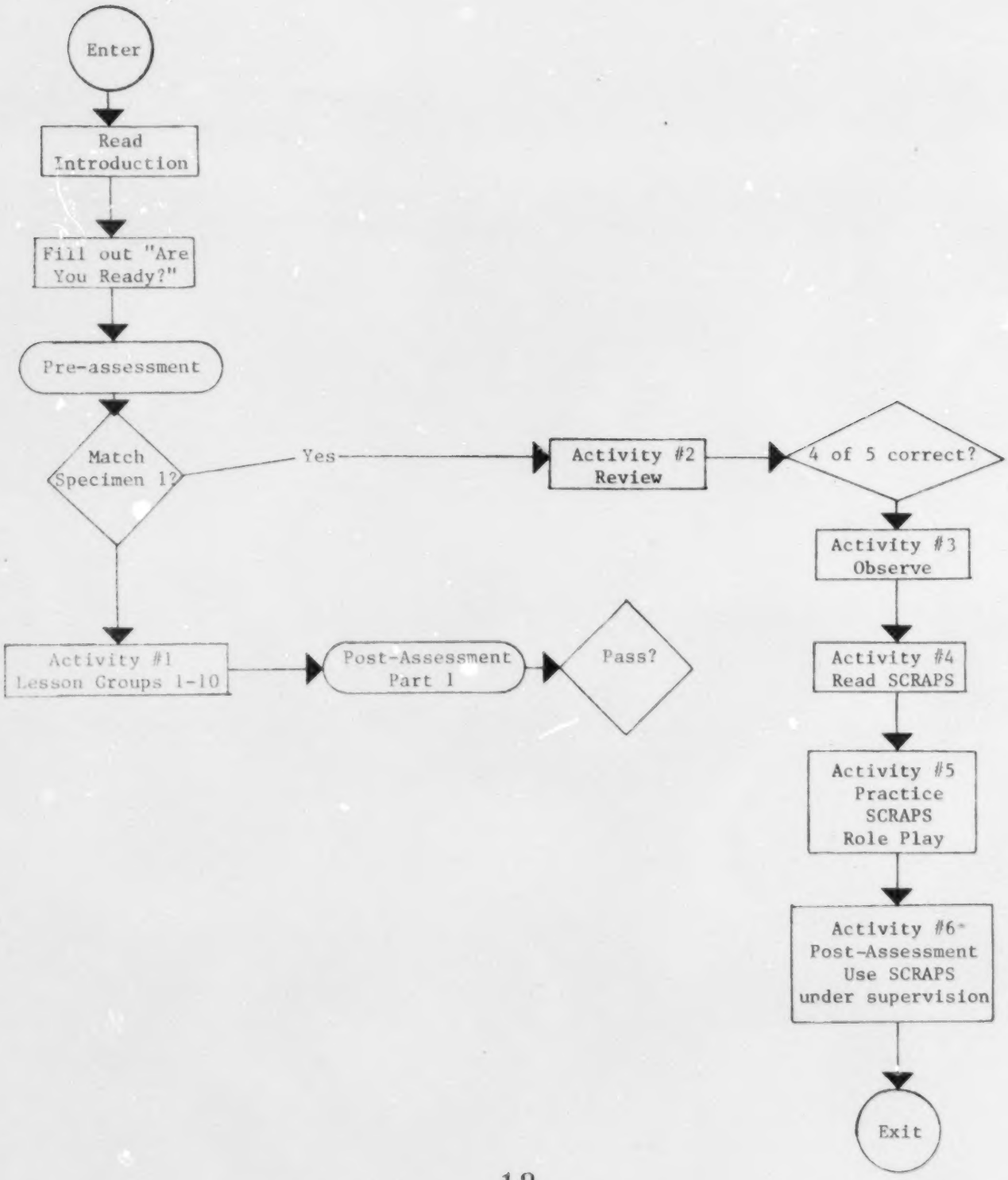
8. Do Activity #5. You will look at handwriting samples and practice what you will say to a child.

9. Do Activity #6. You will practice tutoring children under supervision (this is also the post assessment).

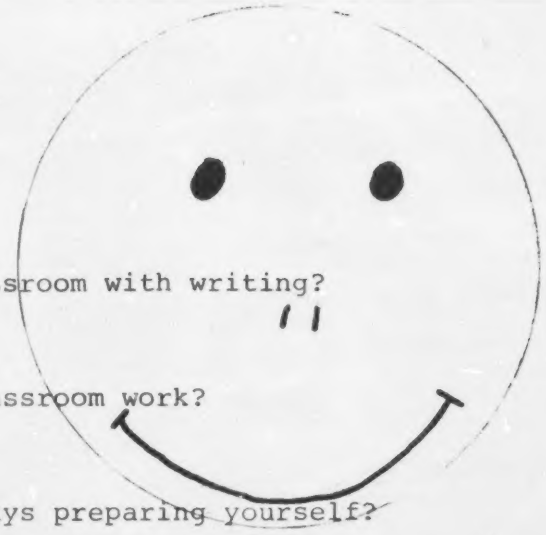
10. The Flow Chart (p. 7) explains the sequence of your self-directed activities in picture form. Follow the arrows.

11. Definitions of terms unfamiliar to you may be found in the Glossary (p. 36).

Flow Chart


Enter
Read Introduction
Fill out "Are You Ready?"
Pre-assessment
Match Specimen 1?
Yes
Activity #2 Review
4 of 5 correct?
Activity #3 Observe
Activity #4 Read SCRAPS
Activity #5 Practice SCRAPS Role Play
Activity #6* Post-Assessment Use SCRAPS under supervision
Exit
Activity #1 Lesson Groups 1-10
Post-Assessment Part 1
Pass?

ARE YOU READY?



Do you want to help children in the classroom with writing?

Have you already done some volunteer classroom work?

Are you willing to spend from 2 to 12 days preparing yourself?

Completed by Resource Person

Your Resource Person is _____.

Handwriting is being taught in the classroom on _____
(day)

from _____.
(Time)

You will observe the handwriting lesson (Activity #3) _____.
(date)

Pre-Assessment

The following activity will tell you how your writing compares to that which is taught in school. You will check yourself.

If you will be working in third grade or above (or you don't know) copy the following sentences on the paper provided. Copy the first in cursive writing (script) and the second in manuscript (print). If you are planning to work only in first on second grades, do only the one in manuscript.

Compare your sample to the scale. If you feel you need more work on letter formation go to Activity #1. If yours is as good as Specimen 1 proceed to Activity #2.

Cursive

My name stands for me. I want to write it well.

Manuscript

We are learning many new things about space. How far in space would we need to travel to reach the first planet?

14

ACTIVITY #1

Learning to Write

Good handwriting is learned over a long period of time. You must practice often. This part of the module will only help you get started. Don't expect to master all the letters and techniques in one session. The more you study and practice, the better you should be able to help children even though your own handwriting is not perfect. Continue to refer to the chart or resource person as you work in the classroom.

Letter formation is taught by printing groups of letters which are formed in a similar way. Practice each of the following lesson groups. Watch the arrows carefully! They tell you which way to go.

Proper position is important. For a right-handed manuscript writer, the pencil eraser should point to the center of the body. The paper should be in front of the writer and parelle to the edge of the desk. For cursive writing, the right-hander slants the paper to the left with the corner of the paper pointing to the center of the body. Everything else is the same. Hold the pencil between the thumb and first two fingers about an inch above the point. A rubber band around the pencil where the color starts is a good reminder.

When you are satisfied with each lesson group, show your best work to the resource person. Each lesson group should be done on a different day. You may wait until you are ready for the Part I Post-assessment before you talk with the Resource Person.

Straight line letters

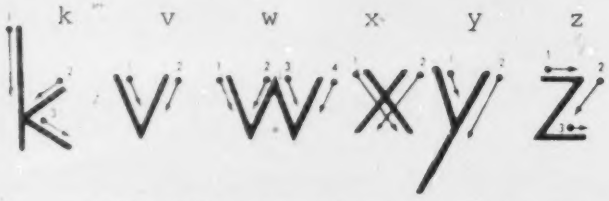
i l t

The t is a 3/4 letter.

The dot on the i is just above the line.

Slant letters

k v w x y z

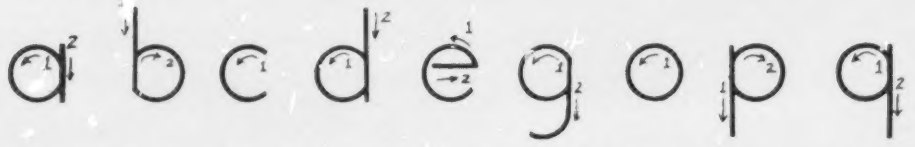


Remember to pick up your pencil after each stroke.

Pull all strokes from top to bottom.

Circle letter

a b c d e g o p q



If the circle comes first it is made counter-clockwise (a c d e g o q)

If the circle comes after the stick make the circle clockwise (b p)

On counter clockwise circles start at 2 o'clock.

On clockwise circles start at 10 o'clock.

Make sure all circles are round not oval.

Don't put a tail on a and d.

The horizontal line on e may be made first or last be is always made left to right.

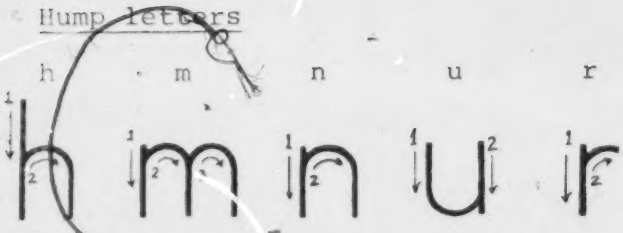
Tail letters

g j p q y

The tail drops 1/2 space below the base line.

Hump letters

h m n u r

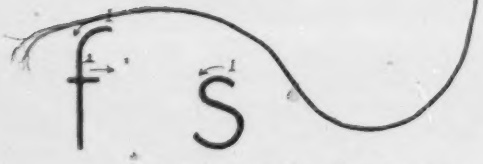


The hump stroke starts 1/2 way up the vertical stroke in h n m r.

The hump stroke in u ends 1/2 way up the vertical stroke.

Miscellaneous letters (lower case)

f s



S is made in one continuous stroke.

If properly made s should fit into an o. Check yourself.

Lesson Group 4-Fourth Day

Slant Capital letters

A K M N V W X Y Z

Make all strokes top to bottom.

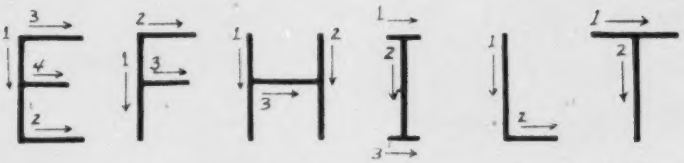
Lift the pencil after each stroke.

The cross bar in A is low.

Note that the stroke in the middle of M N is made last.

Straight Line Capitals

E F H I L T



Note that the last stroke (middle of letter) on E and F is shorter than the top.

All vertical strokes are made first except in capital I and T.

Note that the base stroke on I, E is longer than the top stroke of the letter.

Circle capitals

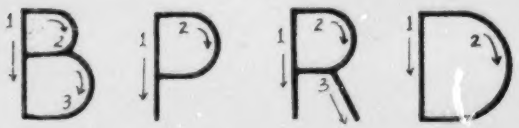
C G O Q

Capital C and O are made like lower case only larger.

G is made by making a C first then adding a stroke that looks like a 7.

Side turn capitals

B P R D



The horizontal side turn letters are flat.

The lobe on the D is more than 1/2 a circle.

Miscellaneous

J U S

The capital S is made like the lower case but larger.

Note the capital J has no top.

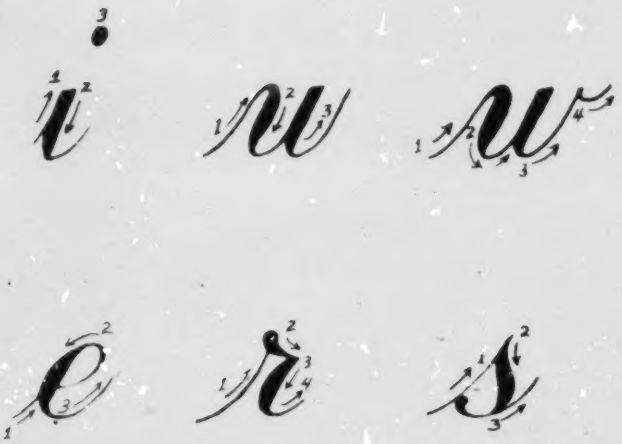
Note the capital U has no vertical stroke.

All three letters are made in one continuous stroke.

20

Undercurve beginnings

i *u* *w* *e* *r* *s*



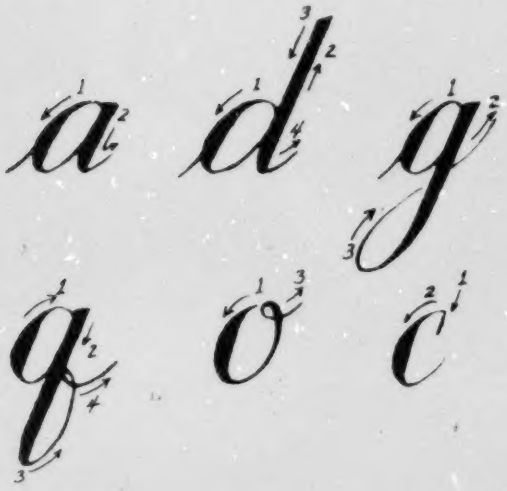
Loop letters

e *f* *b* *h* *k*

Lesson Group 7-Seventh Day

Small oval group

a *d* *g* *q* *o* c



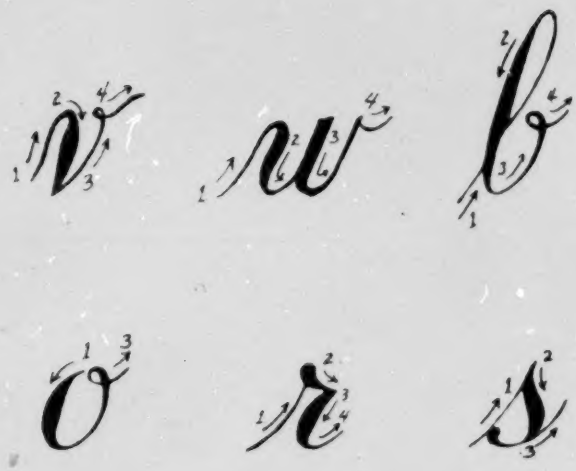
Lower-loop letters

j *g* *p* *y* *z* *q* *ß*

Lesson Group 8-Eighth Day

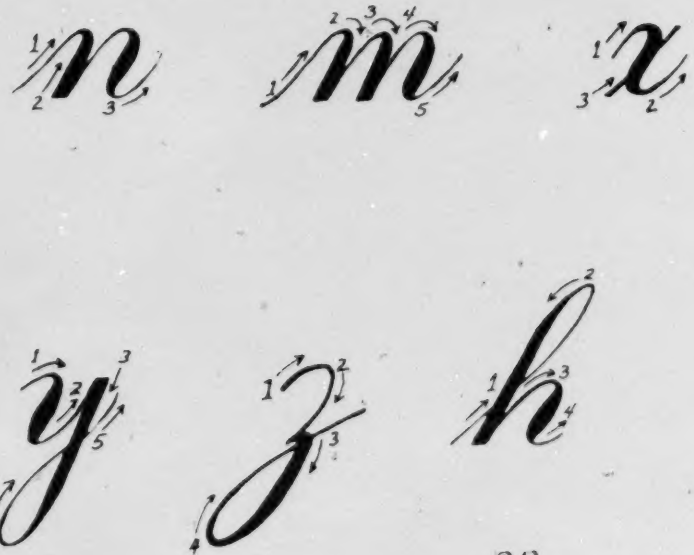
Check stroke letters

v w b o r s



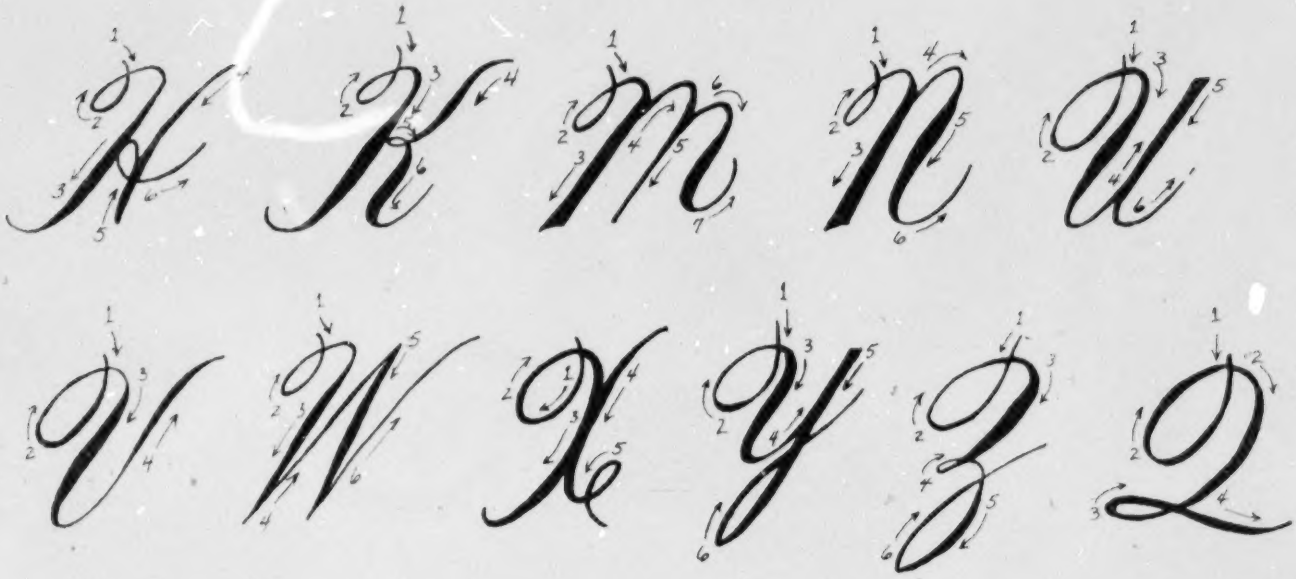
Hump letters

n m v x y z h



Cane Letters - Capitals

H K M N U V W X Y Z Q



Oval Letters - Capitals

O D C E A

Lesson Group 10-Tenth Day

Boat Letters

S G I T F B

Miscellaneous Letters

J L P R

POST-ASSESSMENT PART I

Handwriting Achievement

Copy the paragraph (as you did on the Pre-assessment). When you compare this work to your first writing sample you should see improvement.

Even if you do not match Specimen 1, go on the Part II. Now you will learn how to help children with their writing.

****
* There are an estimated 2.5 million school volunteers today. *
****

ACTIVITY #2

Reviewing Letter Forms

Study the writing chart(s) included. The letter forms may be slightly different from your usual handwriting. As a review, cover-up the chart and try to write the following letter forms from memory. Put in directional arrows and number each stroke.

M J t a E

Uncover the chart and compare your letters with those on the chart.

If you have 4 of the 5 correct, go on to Activity 3. If you have less than 4 formed correctly, review all the letters before going on to Activity 3.

ACTIVITY #3

Look, Listen and Learn

Observe the teacher as at least one handwriting lesson is taught. The best way to understand the learning sequence is to observe a lesson every day for a week.

As you observe, fill in the answers on the observation sheet provided. (Classroom Observation Sheet p.24). Try to find the answers by observing rather than asking. This will keep you from interrupting the lesson. You may not be able to answer some questions as handwriting materials are not the same in all schools.

The answers you collect will help you know what to do when you begin helping with handwriting.

Spend some time looking through the writing text. This will help you know what is being taught.

****
* School volunteers in the United States have given a minimum *
* of $640 million worth of time to their schools in the past *
* decade. *
****

Classroom Observation Sheet for Activity #3

1. What kind of pencils do pupils use?

   _____ regular #2 pencils

   _____ large diameter pencils

   _____ pen

   _____ other (list _____

2. Are they allowed to erase? _____

3. What kind and size of paper is being used? _____

4. What is the writing position being used? _____

5. What special instructions does the teacher give? _____

   _____

   _____

6. What is the name of the text book?

   _____

7. Do the children write in a special writing workbook? _____

8. Where are the writing paper and pencils kept? _____

   _____

9. What are the rules for distributing paper and pencils? _____

   _____

10. Are there any rules for sharpening pencils? _____

    _____

ACTIVITY #4

Read SCRAPS Program

A volunteer will be expected to look at individual children's writing and to suggest corrections where needed.

There are many elements which are important to good penmanship lessons. Some of the things a volunteer can look for are:

1. Spacing
2. Correct letter formation
3. Reversals
4. Alignment of letters
5. Praise
6. Slant

Notice that the first letter of each element spells SCRAPS. You may use this acronym to help you remember what to do. If the teacher gives you no special instructions, select only one of the above elements and look for it on all the papers you study on any one day. Looking for too many different kinds of things at one time may confuse you and the children.

You will find each of the above items discussed and suggestions to the volunteer listed on the following pages.

Volunteers will not be grading papers. The volunteers will be talking with children to help them see and correct their own errors. Don't write for them -- just write a sample on SCRAPS of paper.

Cut writing paper into SCRAPS which have at least a full line with spacing on each sheet. Use the SCRAPS to demonstrate letter forms to individual students and leave the SCRAPS for the student to use as a model.

Spacing
C
R
A
P
S

There should be regular spacing between letters, between words and between sentences.

Between letters - the width of four pencil marks between letters such as "im" and two pencil marks between letters like "oo"

Between words - the width of the letter "o"

Between sentences (use also for margins and for identations) - the width of two letter "o"'s

S
Correct letter formation
R
A
P
S

Review the first part of this module for correct letter formation. The teacher may assign one or more letters for the volunteer to look at during the lesson. If this assignment is not made, the volunteer may choose one letter to study.

The letters in 'rate' are the most frequently formed incorrectly. Any one of the four letters would be good for a volunteer to chose.

Check these points:

Round letters should be round not oval in manuscript.

Letters with the circle first are made counter-clock-wise.

Letters with the stick first are made clock-wise.

All vertical lines are made from top to bottom.

S
C
Reversals
A
P
S

Young children often make reversals in writing. The volunteer should be able to help them recognize that the letter is backwards or upside down. These letters are often reversed or confused by beginning writers:

p for q

d for b

n for u

m for n

You may:

Talk with the child about which way the letter faces.

Give the child clues such as "'b' has a big belly that sticks out in front of it."

Have the child make a letter as you make a model of the correctly oriented letter on SCRAPS of paper. Have the child compare the two.

Remind the child of the sequence of the letter's formation. This will help the child put the stick in the right position in relationship to the circle.

S
C
R
Alignment
P
S

Proper alignment means that the writing is on the base line and the letters are kept the same in size and height.

Points to check:

All tall letters (b, d, f, h, k, i) should be the same height. Have the child lay a ruler across the tops of the tall letters to check this.

All minimum letters (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, v, w, x, z) should be the same height.

The lower-case 't' is a three-fourths size letter. It is three-fourths the size of an 'I'. (In some writing texts, 't' is full height.)

The tails on tail letters (g, j, p, q, y) should be even.

S
C
R
A
Praise
S

Children thrive on praise. One of the most important things a good helper can do is praise children for the good points in their work. The volunteer can help the teacher supply this praise. Here are some praising comments you can make to children to help them feel good about their work and encourage them to improve.

Suggested comments:

- Your paper is very neat.
- Your spacing is good.
- Your writing is easy for me to read.
- You made the letter "___" well.
- Your margins are even.
- Your letters are the right size.
- Your pencil and paper position is correct.
- Your line quality is even. (Not too thick or too thin.)
- Your circles are nice and round.
- Your down strokes are vertical.
- You are taking time to do a good job.

S
C
R
A
P
Slant

In manuscript all letters should be vertical and not slanted.

In cursive writing the letters should have a uniform slant.

Points to check:

Help children test their slant in cursive writing by drawing slanting lines through the letters. Point out which letters are off slant.

If the slant is extremely backward (forward of vertical in cursive writing) remind the child to place the paper properly.

In manuscript writing, the paper should be even with the edge of the desk.

****
* Volunteering can be profitable. You can deduct your *
* transportation expenses as charitable contributions *
* on your income tax. *
****

ACTIVITY #5

Practice Using SCRAPS

In this activity you will role-play with another volunteer or your Resource Person. You will put into practice what you have learned from reading Activity #4.

1. Make SCRAPS pad.

   a) Cut regular handwriting paper into 3 x 5 strips (approximately). How these are cut will depend upon the size of paper used. Be sure complete baseline, midline and headline are on each sheet. The backs of used paper may be made into economical SCRAPS pads.

   b) Staple the ends together to form a little pad.

   c) Write a model and tear off the sheet of the SCRAPS paper. Give these to the child.

   d) Do not mark on the child's paper. Use SCRAPS paper instead.

2. Look at the sample of handwriting (p. 33). Pretend you are helping this child. What would you say about correct letter forms? What will you need to write on SCRAPS of paper for this child? Do it.

3. Ask your partner what you did right and what you could have done better.

4. Check your answers against the key on p. 34.

5. Now reverse roles and repeat the activity. Don't forget to use the "P" or praise element from SCRAPS! If you have time, select another element from SCRAPS and practice it.

6. Ask your partner if you are ready for the post-assessment.

7. Take the "Match the Handwriting Terms" assessment. (p. 37)

8. Check your answers with p. 36. If you had at least ten (10) correct, Take a Bow! Your SCRAPS know-how is super!

The End

Curio us George

is a story adout a

verY curious monkey.

Answers to ACTIVITY #5

Spacing	--	between "o" and "u" in curious
Correct letter formation	--	"e" in George
		"a" has tail
Reversals	--	"d" is reversed
Alignment	--	"y" in very is not set on baseline
Praise	--	neat; good margins; circle letters round
Slant	--	"t" not vertical

****
* Volunteering can help you when you seek paid employment. *
* The experience and recommendations from volunteer work *
* can be used when you apply. *
****

ACTIVITY #6

Post-Assessment Part II

The Resource Person will observe the volunteer using the SCRAPS program in the classroom and will make a check by each question answered with "Yes."

_____ Does the volunteer avoid writing on the child's paper?

_____ Does the volunteer have a SCRAPS pad prepared?

_____ Does the volunteer write models on the SCRAPS of paper?

_____ Does the volunteer put a limit of no more than one of the SCRAPS elements at a time?

_____ Does the volunteer correct children in a positive way?

_____ Does the volunteer help children when help is needed, but remain out of the way when no help is needed?

6 checks	Super
5 checks	You're doing okay
4 checks	Review this module

GLOSSARY

Acronym	A word made-up of the initials of several other words. It is used as an abbreviation of these words. USA is an acronym. SCRAPS is the acronym used in this packet.
Baseline	The bottom of three lines. Many letters sit on the baseline.
Cursive	Script of "real" writing; usually begun in second or third grade.
Headline	The uppermost of three lines; tall letters touch the headline.
Horizontal Line	Straight line across and parallel to the baseline.
Manuscript	Printed letters. Used in early grades.
Midline	The middle of three lines.
Pre-assessment; Post-assessment	Tests taken before and after learning.
Role Play	Practice where you play act a situation.
SCRAPS	An acronym which stands for the initial letters of six handwriting elements. They are: S (Spacing) C (Correct letter formation) R (Reversals) A (Alignment of letters) P (Praise) S (Slant)
Stroke	The marks used to make letters.
Vertical Lines	Straight up and down lines.

Check Your Handwriting Vocabulary

Match the term on the left with the definition on the right by writing its number on the line before the definition.

1. Acronym	___ Test taken before learning
2. Baseline	___ The uppermost line which all tall letters touch
3. Cursive	___ The middle of three lines
4. Headline	___ Test taken after learning
5. SCRAPS	___ Straight up and down lines
6. Role Play	___ Straight line across
7. Manuscript	___ The bottom line of three lines
8. Midline	___ "Real" writing usually begun in grades 2-3
9. Horizontal Line	___ The initial letters of six handwriting elements
10. Pre-assessment	___ Acting out a situation
11. Post-assessment	___ Printed letters used in primary grades.

Complete item eight (8) on page 32.

43

Specimen 1 -- High for Grade 3
Similar manuscript writing may be given a mark of A, and writing better than this may be evaluated accordingly.

Specimen 1 -- High for Grade 3
Similar cursive handwriting may be marked A, and writing better than this may be evaluated accordingly.

Use a handwriting specimen from the manual adopted for use in your school district.